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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
23 June 1948

Vol. III No. 24

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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GREECE

Army launches offensive: The long-heralded Greek Army offensive against the heart of the guerrilla strength in the Grammos Mountains has during the first few days been inconclusive. Both the army and the guerrillas realize that on this operation will depend the immediate military future of the rebellion, and both are fighting cautiously but determinedly. The army forces of 70,000 are superior in size and supplies, and possess air support; the guerrillas (numbering some 7,500) have the advantage of rugged terrain, strongly prepared positions, extensive mine fields, and at the moment, a safe flank on the Albanian border. Already there are reports that hard-pressed guerrilla detachments have crossed the border to circle back on Albanian territory and attack army units from the rear.

The perfect timing with which the army units moved into their starting positions indicates that the operation is well planned, and they will probably be able to attain their initial objectives despite the stiff opposition they are encountering. The important test, however, will be whether the army can seal the Albanian border and prevent the scattered guerrilla bands from re-forming when the drive is over.

The accompanying map shows the locale of the operations. Near the southern part of the Albanian border, army units are holding the Ioannina-Konitsa road and have penetrated northward parallel to the border for a distance of some ten miles. To the east, stiff resistance has been met. Near the Albanian border in the north, army units are attacking both southward and northward; the latter thrust is designed to prevent guerrillas from the north from interfering with the principle army drive. The most urgent objective of the first phase of the operation is to effect a junction between the two prongs driving along the border, thereby completing encirclement of guerrillas and preventing their escape into Albania. In almost all sectors, the army's rear is threatened (although not vitally) by guerrilla forces from outside the operational area.

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TURKEY

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Turks wary of Soviet gestures: A friendlier Soviet attitude toward Turkish officials abroad has recently become discernible notwithstanding recurrent border troubles and other irritating difficulties between Turkey and Bulgaria. Although the Turks will welcome this unwonted friendliness, they are not likely to be misled by it. If it presages conciliatory overtures by the new Soviet Ambassador in Ankara, the Turks may be expected to demand concrete demonstrations of respect for their independence and sovereign rights rather than the mere diplomatic expression of kindly sentiment. That Turkey's foreign policy is to remain as firm as ever was recently reiterated by the new cabinet, whose program was overwhelmingly approved by the National Assembly.

PALESTINE

No solution in sight: The Palestine truce is proving effective despite minor infractions by both Arabs and Jews. The difficult problems of Jewish immigration and the supplying of beleaguered Jerusalem have been settled more or less to the satisfaction of both sides. Jewish and Arab representatives are in Rhodes for consultation under UN Mediator Bernadotte. Despite these encouraging signs, however, an agreed solution between Arab and Jew appears as remote as ever. The UK is exploring the idea that the Arabs might be persuaded to accept "a small, compact sovereign Jewish state." Even if the Arabs should prove amenable to such a suggestion, there is no reason to believe that the Jews would accept anything less than the territory assigned them by the UN partition plan. Thus neither the month's fighting since 15 May nor the UN truce has changed the basic issues between the Jews and Arabs, and it appears that a solution will have to be imposed by one side on the other or by some outside force on both.

ARAB STATES

Projected Ibn Saud-Abdullah meeting: A Saudi-Hashimite understanding may develop out of the meeting which will take place later this month in Saudi Arabia between Abdullah of Transjordan and Ibn Saud, on the invitation of the latter. Ibn Saud's show of friendship to his traditional enemy is further evidence of a decisive shift in the balance of power in the Arab states. The recent rapprochement between Egypt, Transjordan, and Iraq, resulting from their parallel military responsibilities

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in Palestine, dangerously isolated Saudi Arabia. Ibn Saud, who has been frantically but unsuccessfully soliciting US military aid for several months in order to defend himself against the alleged threats of Hashimite aggression, has probably come to the conclusion that he can no longer afford to maintain his dynastic feud with the Hashimites. In addition, because of the passive role which he has until now played in the Palestine war, Ibn Saud probably fears that he has lost face among the Arabs, who demand that their leaders take forceful action in Palestine. By agreeing to support Abdullah wholeheartedly against the Zionists, Ibn Saud will not only improve his prestige in the Arab world but may also be able to persuade Abdullah to abandon his claims to the Saudi Arabian province of the Hejaz, which Ibn Saud took from the Hashimites after World War I. Whether such a "deal" will result from the Riyadh meeting (to which the Hashimite Regent of Iraq has also been invited) is difficult to say, but it is undoubtedly what Ibn Saud is after. Other Arab leaders, particularly officials of the Arab League, will doubtless welcome Ibn Saud's gesture as an indication that traditional rivalries, which have hitherto seriously hampered Arab unity, are in the process of being dissolved.

IRAN

Security jeopardized by political dissension: Internal political dissension is threatening Iranian stability and is also diverting both official and popular attention from the constant danger of Soviet encroachment. The election of Hajir to the premiership has brought on popular demonstrations instigated by strong hostile factions and participated in by members of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party. His cabinet, which contains a number of ultra-conservative and inexperienced men, may prove ineffectual in coping with the demoralized political situation. Meanwhile, Soviet pressure on Iran continues, including several forays from the USSR into Iranian territory.

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